**Top Tunes for Teaching**

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**10 Great Reasons to Use Music**

You probably already know all the good reasons for using music while you teach, but have you ever tried to articulate them to others? Here is a good list of reasons why music benefits learning.

1. *Increase social contact*. Music encourages social contact by putting people into a positive, relaxed mental state. Louder music can bring others close together if only so they can hear each other better! Familiar, fun music puts groups in a social mood.
2. *Prime students for learning*. Prepare learners for upcoming tasks by selecting music to put them in a particular emotional state or by playing a song with content-applicable lyrics (there really are songs about science, geography, math, English, and P. E.).
3. *Entrain emotional states of mind*. When everyone in the audience hears the same piece of music over time, they often get into the same emotional state, mental rhythm, and frame of mind. Music creates a harmonic beacon for our bodies to follow.
4. *Deliver key messages*. Sometimes music can send a message to your students better than you can. Certain songs can do that well; browse the lists of songs in this book for ideas and recommendations.
5. *Provide a background for physical movement*. Up-tempo music playing in the background prompts learners to move faster. When you want them to get up and perform a physical task, play a song from the *18 Pumped-Up, High-Energy Jams* or *10 More Upbeat Energizers* lists on pages 36 and 43.
6. *Evoke specific memories*. Certain songs may remind listeners of what they were doing when they first heard that song. Other songs may invite the listener to evoke a new memory not previously associated with that song. Experiment with both.
7. *Energize a group*. Fast music, or music with 100 to 140 beats per minute (BPM), is both stressful and energizing. Use it as a strategic tool to get stu- dents up on their feet and moving or busily working to meet a deadline. (See *3 Ways to Pace Instruction with Beats per Minute* on page 14.)

8. *Establish an auditory backdrop*. Music playing in the background can provide a stable, predictable backdrop to the day’s events. The next time you watch a movie, pay attention to how often music is played in the background. The music you choose should match and enhance the direction of the day, not overwhelm it. Instrumental music with 55 to 70 BPM works best for this purpose.

9. *Calm the mind and body*. Slow-paced music practically forces the body and mind to slow down to its tempo. Play music at 40 to 55 BPM and expect miracles! Two lists of relaxing music, *15 Soothing, Inspiring Tunes* and *17 Albums to Calm the Mind and Soothe the Body*, appear on pages 27 and 46.

10. *Heal.* There is some scientific evidence that music, when used in certain ways, reduces stress and strengthens the immune system.

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